

Audio Sermon: God's Man for Our Time - Urbana 1967

by George Verwer

George Verwer's sermon calls for a genuine commitment to Christ, emphasizing the importance of personal experience and the reality of faith in overcoming life's challenges.

Duration: 30:02

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Matthew 16:24, John 14:6, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 4:13, Colossians 2:9, Hebrews 4:12, James 4:8, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Personal Revival", "Spiritual Transformation"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the need for individuals to come to the end of themselves, admit their struggles and shortcomings, and seek a genuine, transformative encounter with Jesus Christ. It touches on the challenges of living out one's faith authentically, the importance of deep personal prayer and Bible study, and the reality of experiencing God's sufficiency in all areas of life.

Transcript

I don't think I can explain to you how difficult it is for me. I've never spoke at conventions like this in my life. I haven't been in America for almost eight years, apart from a few weeks traveling to Mexico.

And most of my life and time is given to personal counseling and personal evangelism. And if you think that I'm not serious in what I say, I can only ask you to somehow give me the chance to know you personally. But I would do almost anything tonight to help even one needy person in this auditorium.

I pray that you'll listen in these closing moments. Some of you perhaps will be leaving before tomorrow. I know you're tired, but I pray that you'll listen, not to me.

Some of you, I'm sure, already are a bit put off at some of the things I've said. But that you'll listen to the Lord. Let us just unite for a moment of prayer and ask God to bring us even further into focus.

Our Father, you know that when I pray, I've always wanted to be honest. You know, Lord, how I hate sham. You know, God, how I hate the phoniness in my own life.

You know, I haven't got the qualifications just described by these men. You know, I'm dead scared. But I pray that you'll blot me out as been mentioned before.

By your Holy Spirit, God, do something in this auditorium that will last for time in eternity. Lord, not just among the students, but among us. Missionaries, you know our hearts.

Leaders, executives, Lord, you know our hearts. Moved by your Holy Spirit, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

I know some young people who, upon reading a missionary biography, only become depressed. I know some who, when reading the story of the men who were martyred in South America many years ago, only become convinced that they'll never do it. We read about George Mueller and how he prayed in millions of pounds by faith to support his orphanages, and we don't even understand it, and we become overwhelmed.

And I think if I was sitting here in my freshman year at college, I was only converted one year at that time, and I heard some of these challenges and some of these facts and the qualifications so tremendously presented by our brethren, I would have to just confess I couldn't do it. I'm a very normal person. Some of you probably think I'm a public speaker.

When I first got up in my grammar school to say a few words in a play, I trembled, cried, and forgot every line, but by the grace of God I'm here. I don't know why I was invited, except that I know that these men on this platform are hungry for reality, and they love you, and so they've given me, perhaps one of the youngest persons to ever speak in such a meeting, a wonderful opportunity, and I'm very grateful to them because my heart goes out to you. Many of you are my own age.

My heart goes out. Some of you already have come to me with your problems. Many of you have admitted and spoken among yourselves about the dichotomy I spoke about yesterday, and you know it's very real.

My heart goes out to those of you who are the sons and daughters of missionaries, of Christians, of strong evangelicals. You've been reared like my children from the very earliest age on Bible verses. My son at six years has already passed out hundreds of facts all by himself in a single day, and perhaps some of you were doing the same thing as a young child, and yet now at university, now at college, somehow it's not any longer real.

You've looked at that card, a very powerful card, and although I'm preaching for decision tonight, and I believe Jesus Christ preached for decision, he told Zacchaeus to come down. He told the man to put mud on his eye. Wherever he went, he called people to decision, but tonight I would, with fear, would call anyone to this decision without counting the cost.

I think of the words in the 14th chapter of the Gospel of Luke, where Jesus said that we must count the cost, and before you make a decision like this, before you put your name on something like this, you must count the cost. Lest you become like thousands of young people, and those of us on the platform know this is true, who have signed their names, who have raised their hands, and yet who have never fulfilled that commitment. Yes, I'm afraid if I were here in my freshman year, I would be somewhat frustrated.

We speak about these qualifications. Who can live like this? Recently, I was reading Andrew Murray's book on humility. I wanted to quit the ministry.

I couldn't even understand what he was talking about, much less ever have it, and as I've been reading again and again books by men of God, studying the biographies, I feel so overwhelmed by it all, and I want to speak to those of you especially tonight who feel somewhat overwhelmed, somewhat incapable.

You've got problems in your life. You know that this dichotomy is very real in your life, and you can sing onward, Christian soldiers.

You've never marched for Christ, though you can say, who will follow in his train? You know deep in your heart you're not following in his train, and the songs, the songs that we've sung, the hymns that we've sung, even in these meetings, carry enough spiritual truth to drive us to the uttermost parts of the earth, to drive us to the unconverted man in our university. If it's real, the very statements on this card, the ones that Eric Fry so carefully went over, if they became real in our life, we would become revolutionists for Jesus Christ. Men would be one on our campuses.

Our chapters would become alive by the love of Jesus Christ. We would be constrained to go, to give, to love, and to experience this tremendous reality that there is in Jesus Christ. An atheist once said to an evangelical Christian in the British Isles, if I believed what you say you believe, I would cross Britain on broken glass upon my knees to tell men about it.

When I graduated from my high school, I was called class clown. Everything was a joke to me. I had more jokes, and more witty stories, and more swear words, and more things that I could keep people laughing all night.

I always get excited or interested as we press toward ending the meeting early, and I'm going to finish on time, because my night, Saturday nights, used to begin about 10. We'd go over the river into New York City with one of our girls. I had about 32 of them between 12 and 16.

Don't laugh. Some of you had far more than that. And we'd begin to dance, this old-fashioned rock and roll, and the twist was just coming in when I got twisted out by the Lord, praise God.

And I would start dancing, Guy Lombardo or a record, whatever I could dance to, whatever I could find. I had loudspeakers all over my room. They automatically kicked off in the morning and roused me out of bed to some jazz or something else to keep me going.

I lived on music. And we would just start about 10 o'clock. And I loved it.

When Jesus Christ found me, I couldn't say that I was sad. I was fantastically happy. I had a beautiful pond next to me in the sea in Madison Square Garden.

I was enjoying life. Some people think you only come to Christ when you're sad, when you're overwhelmed, you're depressed, you had a tremendous guilt conflict. Then you come to Christ.

No, not necessarily. But I want to say this with all my heart. God pulled me out of those nightclubs.

And he gave me something more real. I'd never be here tonight. I loved dancing.

I loved music. I loved all the things of the world. And even today, if somebody played a jukebox in the corner, I'd have to hold my knee down.

But for the past nine years, the only times I've been up very much after 12 o'clock or one or two, and our dance used to go on to seven, and then we'd go swimming. You know the problem some of you have been to. The only thing that's kept me up that late in these past eight years, and it's usually been every other week or so, is spending a night with believers in prayer and worship to God.

Spending seven or eight hours in the presence of God and worshiping him. I want to tell you God is real. I want to tell you God is so real that though my friend said I'd be back in one month, I haven't been back once in 11 years.

I want to tell you God is so real he can make rock and roll and all the poison sugar-coated pills of this world seem like dead stones in the middle of a desert. I'm convinced that Jesus Christ is so real that his love is so tremendous that when we really fall in love with him, we really experience his life. These things of the world fall off without the 99 negatives that are often preached at us.

Some of you know, many of you know, that it's not that real to you. You say, well that's okay to you. God found you in a nightclub.

But what about us tricky young people? I want to tell you about one of my best friends. He was the president of Moody Bible Institute when I went as a student there, and the student council and he met me. His name was Jonathan.

Jonathan was born on the mission field reared of missionary parents. I couldn't believe it. Jonathan told me not too long ago he had never kissed a girl in his life.

I wouldn't even talk to a girl on a date if I couldn't, never mind the word I use, but I couldn't believe it. And Jonathan McCroskey from the very early years on the mission field to this day has gone on for God. There was a time when it became very unreal.

There was a time when he almost became an agnostic even in the middle of Bible school. But as he met other Christians, as he experienced reality and saw that this thing could be lived, that Jesus Christ is alive in the 20th century, he recommitted his life and has become a mighty man for God and it's only for him that I've been able to go on to Asia as he coordinates this work all over Europe. He's got the same life, the same deal.

He's got more love. He's got more realities than I and yet he came from Christian homes just like many of you. Jesus Christ can meet every need whether God found you in the deepest ditch in Chicago or God found you out as a missionary child.

He can meet your need tonight. That's the one thing I want to say. And when he meets your need, when you've experienced victory, when you know reality, then and only then can you be God's man and God's woman on the mission field.

I'm not talking about perfection. I'm not having come to offer you any kind of spiritual pet pill tonight and say believe this and everything from now on will be like that. No.

Jesus Christ said if any man will come after me let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. Do you believe that? He repeated again and again in each one of the Gospels and victory is not easy and there'll be battles and there'll be struggles but there is victory. In the book of John it says and this is the victory that overcomes the world even our faith and in a few minutes though I don't like it, though my personality rebels against it, I'm going to give you the opportunity to express it like Zacchaeus did when he came down the tree.

You're going to be thinking about it in these next few minutes. But my invitation to you tonight is not necessarily to be a missionary. You have to work that out on your knees before God.

I don't believe we as missionaries so-called are any more committed necessarily than the man who never moves out of his factory. I believe that with all my heart. If God calls you to a carpenter shop, remember that's what Jesus did most of the years of his life.

You have to work that out and as you work it out and pray and seek God's will and that's one of the greatest privileges we have to know the will of God then you can fill out that card and with sincerity and faith you can mail it in or you can give it in. But my invitation tonight is to those of you who at any cost want to know reality in your life. During these days at the conference something has been ringing in your heart.

I can't explain it to you. It'll be different in one man as in another. I think we've got to throw away the cookie cutter and stop pretending we're all going to get to cross our t's in the same place.

And so the decision for one might be to know Jesus Christ. Maybe you don't know Christ. Maybe you've come here believing you're a Christian and now as the spirit of God is witness to you, you realize you've never really been born again.

I've had people going to the doors with our movement to discover that when they got on the door to distribute a book or testify personally for Christ they discovered they didn't know and then were converted to Christ on the doorstep. Some already here have confessed faith in Jesus Christ. But my main invitation and appeal to you tonight and I appeal to your logic more than anything else is that you will come to the end of yourself.

You will be honest. You will admit that you don't have reality if your heart and the Lord convicts you that you don't have it. You admit that the dichotomy exists that what you say you are, what you sign you believe, what you sing is not really operational and functional and real in your own life.

And I just say this it won't come all tonight but there's got to be a beginning. I believe there has to be some kind of crisis in our lives but usually in most lives many crises, many crises lead the lives of men of God. I think this idea that there's one special crisis that when you get it that's it is one of the biggest lies Satan.

The men of God who I have studied have all had that all different kinds of crises and some of them have had many crises but in every case that crisis was followed by a process as we spoke about the other day and if you're not ready for the process, if you're not ready to put importance on your quiet time then don't stand to your feet tonight. Billy Graham when he spoke here in 1957 stated that if he didn't have his quiet time during that day he would experience problems and difficulties during the day and if Billy Graham with all the power God has given him is dependent on that daily time with God what about us? If you're not serious about Bible study if you're not ready to get into God's words and let the word of God devour you, you see our problems are in our unconscious mind. I'll never forget when George Duncan the great British preacher explained one time how so many of our problems are in our unconscious mind.

That's why we do things we don't want to do. That's why we say things we don't want to say. It just comes we wonder why did I say that? Why did you write that? Because those deep problems surge up from our background from our childhood and I believe one of the cleansing powers of the unconscious mind is the word of God.

Now you are clean to the word of God. You say I don't have a time at university. My first year at university I didn't know how I'd ever get any time.

I was running back and forth across the campus and it didn't seem I'd ever get enough time but I want to tell you the only way I got through all of my liberal arts. The liberal arts studies I took and Bible teaching from unbelieving professors and all the rest was because I spent hours on my knees. I talked to a PhD from Princeton.

I said how did you get through Princeton University and still remain preaching the blood of Jesus Christ. A tower saint preaching the full gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. He said young man I spent two hours every day on my knees and in the word of God.

You'll have to find time to get into the word of God. You'll find it. I prayed God give me time.

He did. My physics teacher lectured about everything but physics and I took my physics book and I covered the physics book with my memory verses hundreds of Bible verses that God put in my thick skull by his grace and it revolutionized my thinking. I'm sorry to confess that at the age of 16 among other things I began to peddle pornographic literature.

My mind was warped by the filth and pornography that pours out in our country but I can confess today because of the power of the word of God I have a new mind. I want to tell you it's a liberty. It's a freedom beyond anything you can ever experience.

That which Jesus Christ can give I believe makes LFC seem like a very inexpensive pill to say the least. Oh young people do you think I'm just saying this. We ask if so will you ask the 400 young people from all over the world who have united with me this year who have lived literally on top of me.

Will you ask the 2,000 young people that have marched with our movement from 27 countries across the world. The only way these young people have stuck it out these Cambridge men, Oxford men, Swedish boys and all the rest is because they know in the lives and ranks of these men of God's work it's real. It's real.

Men cannot create in the 20th century life for Lord Jesus Christ. There'll be failures. There'll be sin.

There'll be battles. Victory can be yours if you love Jesus and if you want it. I want to speak for a few moments to the girls.

Majority of you are girls. I wish my wife were here. You think I'd still be burning all out for Christ without a fanatic wife or you don't know anything about life.

My wife had everything against her. She was from a broken home. Her father was killed in Germany.

She had the major problem of all humanity. She wanted love. She wanted marriage.

She thought that everything would be settled if she were only married and I know there's men and girls here tonight like that. You wouldn't dare think of going to the mission field single and yet her stepfather well I can't explain that. Anyway she had to leave home.

She had been in an orphanage as a small girl and when I first met her I didn't notice anything wrong. I challenged her about missions and fell in love. You know people say well you know be careful.

Even tonight I'm sure some are saying well watch out. Now this is emotion. Isn't it amazing? We can get emotional about anything in America.

Nobody says a thing. I used to come home at six in the morning singing, shouting, doing all kinds of things. I was the craziest one in the school.

I would get out in a football field and shout and shout and play the drum and lure the siren around and do anything at the football game. They elected me as president of the class. You can get away with anything but you begin to shout for Christ.

You have an emotional experience with the Lord in which you love him and he becomes real to you and people will call you fanatics. They'll say be careful. It's emotion.

It's going to wear off. That's what they told me the night I accepted Christ in the Billy Graham meeting but I tell you it doesn't wear off. If it's followed up by continual interaction with the Holy Spirit of God it doesn't wear off.

It doesn't wear off. In the process of my wife's life before I married her she was converted but that didn't solve all of her problems. That's only the beginning.

The bible says that the new birth is only the beginning. If only we'd realized that. But then I met her.

We got to know each other. I discovered she had three psychosomatic illnesses. The number one problem in America today.

Migraine headaches, back tension patterns, heartaches. Many doctors say 50% of our illnesses are psychosomatic caused. We knew we couldn't go to the mission field.

She went down to Mexico on one of our teams. She was in bed every night with tears and every kind of problem you could possibly dream of. We knew it had to end.

She went to a book called Dr. Adib's book called Health Springs Fourth. We sat together in the lobby of our school and I told her though I loved her with all my heart we have to break off. She wanted this more than anything else in life.

This was the one thing she hoped and her sickness got worse. She went to a room and did what everybody told her to do, passed it on the lord and she picked it up the next morning and carried it back. At the end of the fourth day she realized the greatest truth in the bible that Jesus Christ is an all-sufficient savior.

He's sufficient for all our needs. He's sufficient for our emotional problems. He's sufficient for our intellectual problems and there in a room in complete quiet she bowed before God as I'm going to ask some of you to do tonight and she said Lord I believe that you are my victim.

I believe that you're all I need and I'm ready to go to the mission field without George Gerber and peace and joy flooded her heart and she was miraculously healed of all these sicknesses and she's been pioneering on for Jesus Christ in very difficult circumstances in 15 countries ever since and I could tell you hundreds of stories. It's not time. I could tell you stories of young boys from the Hindu temples of southern India.

I could tell you stories of young men who've taken two bottles of strong poison to kill himself before they found the living Christ and reality in him. I could be here all night. This thing is real young people but I believe with all my heart it's only real to those who come to that place where they say Lord Jesus you're all

I want.

Not Jesus plus even evangelism. Not Jesus plus this or plus that. With me it couldn't even be Jesus plus operation mobilization.

It must be Jesus Christ and him alone and I'm convinced that if you're willing to come to the end of yourself and say Lord Jesus you're all I want. God you're all I want. That God will begin to break that dichotomy and you will begin to experience a reality that you've never known in your Christian life.

I know this is true tonight and I pray as God leads us. We read as a scripture passage tonight Colossians chapter 2 and I close with these verses so I'd love to speak all night. Verse 9 for in him Jesus Christ dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and ye are complete in him which is the head of all principality and power.

There are needs here tonight. Needs in the social life. Billy Graham in his book World of Flames said we're a nation of sex gluttons.

I couldn't believe it when I read it from the pen of Billy Graham but he's true. This is the biggest battle. Billy said in 57 this is the battle of your life on the campus and if you don't win this battle you're going to find I can't remember his words but it wasn't very pleasant and yet I'm convinced Jesus Christ is sufficient for your sex battles wherever and whatever kind they may be.

I pray you'll take some and devour them but it will only become reality as you experience the sufficiency of Jesus Christ to meet the emotional longings of your own life. Please young people consider him who said you are complete in me. Not a dichotomy.

Not two people. You are one in me and tonight come to that place where you say Lord Jesus Christ you are my all. You are my everything.

I'll follow you. I'll do whatever you want me to do. I'm going to pray.

I'm not going to have you come forward but I'm going to pray and soon as I close in prayer if you really are serious, really serious, you want with all your heart spiritual revolution. You're hungry for God. You're not claiming that you're going to get it all tonight.

There'll be no electric bolts tonight but you're hungry and you're ready to say Lord Jesus Christ I'll deny myself tonight. Whatever your problem is. Whatever area of sin.

Whatever area you've been compromising that they might conquer that city and I believe many of you tonight are going to have to burn your boats if you're going to be a conqueror for Jesus as men are committing themselves to death in Vietnam. Tonight our own countrymen some of my friends but if you're hungry for this you want this as soon as I say it's all I ask. I'm not going to tarry.

I'm not going to play music. I'm not going God's been working. If only three people stand then that will be God's glory.

Heavenly Father you know I need you and I just pray that you'll give you'll give reality to those who are more bold and you'll not let us God. I know God there are hungry people tonight. I wish I could visit by your Holy Spirit.

Oh God move upon this auditorium.

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